

THIRD UNITED STATES-JAPAN CONFERENCE ON
CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL INTERCHANGE

TOKYO, MARCH 2-7, 1966

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The Third U. S. - Japan Conference on Cultural and Educational Interchange, meeting in Tokyo from March 2-7, 1966, concerned itself with the role of the universities in developing mutual understanding between the two countries.

The Conference first noted with deep regret the passing of three men whose idealism and active support made possible the success of the first two Conferences - President John F. Kennedy, Prime Minister Hayato Ikeda, and a former delegate, Professor Hideo Kishimoto. They have been keenly missed, and their untimely deaths are mourned.

Beginning with the opening address by the Japanese Minister of Education, the Conference recognized the growth and breadth of the cultural interchanges that have developed between Japan and the U. S. in recent years. This is, however, the first of these Conferences which has been exclusively concerned with a most vital element in the development of mutual understanding, namely, the universities.

Universities, university scholars, and university students have a unique potential because of their independence of the immediate pressures of politics, their ability to analyze problems substantively, and their role in training and inspiring the leaders of the future. The hope of the world is largely centered on its universities. Universities in Japan and America are the institutions on which we rely for preserving, enriching, and passing on our respective histories and cultures to the new generation. But universities must not only serve their own nation; they are also a key to international cooperation and understanding. To a very large degree they have common tasks in a common community of mankind. Every effort must be directed toward strengthening their mutual capacities for human understanding and harmony, toward using wisely their immense potential to modify behavior and influence relationships, and toward exploring ways for people of different cultures to live and prosper together.

The Conference analyzed these responsibilities boldly and frankly. It identified and discussed in some detail and depth a number of obstacles that hinder full and accurate understanding of

the cultures of Japan and the U. S. on the part of the scholarly communities, such as the different university traditions, differences in scholarly methodology and learning techniques, and in the subtleties of political outlook that may modify or color joint scholarly objectives and influence or even inhibit their accomplishment.

However, there was always complete agreement on the responsibility of universities to pursue their researches and efforts in the service of truth, and make their results available to all mankind.

The Conference emphasized the importance of penetrating scholarly inquiry, because such inquiry contributes to careful analysis of problems and lifts discussion above mere debate and polemics. Such inquiry need not lead to agreement about the solution to practical problems, but it nevertheless encourages the growth of mutual understanding.

In this general context of agreement and purpose, the Conference focused attention and discussion on the agenda items.

I. DEVELOPMENT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING THROUGH EDUCATION

Important differences in viewpoints, particularly on political and international questions were first recognized as obstacles to mutual understanding and to university cooperation. It was agreed, however, that efforts towards mutual understanding are desirable even when differences in political viewpoint exist, and that university cooperation is possible on the basis of objective scholarship. It is an important responsibility of the universities in both countries to promote more objective and realistic thinking.

The conference recognized the important role in developing cultural relations between Japan and America which has been played by the Fulbright program and by the East-West Center in Hawaii. The Japanese delegates expressed the hope that the Japanese government in the future will share in the financial support of these two programs in view of their benefits to Japan. Such joint support would contribute to their long-term continuation and development. The American delegation endorsed this expression.

II. BINATIONAL APPROACHES TO UNIVERSITY EDUCATION

The principal pitfall in present binational approaches to scholarship is superficiality. Without a full understanding of all the factors that make for national outlooks and policies--geographic

considerations, ways of thinking, and historical experience -- the foreign scholar is inhibited in his ability to evaluate data correctly.

The Conference discussed this problem at some length and concluded that certain adjustments need to be made in present exchange programs. If there is to be an evergrowing nucleus of capable Japanese specialists on the United States and American experts on Japan, steps must be taken to ensure that each group has an experience in depth in the other country. This will involve longer periods of study abroad and frequent refresher visits for the scholars of both countries. To cite a specific case, the Conference noted that the Fulbright appointments, particularly in language and area studies, should be for longer terms, and in some cases should be repeated in later years.

III. DEVELOPING BILATERAL FACULTY AND MATERIALS RESOURCES

There was repeated emphasis on the need for increased travel opportunities for Japanese scholars of America, American scholars of Japan, and teachers of both languages. There was even greater emphasis, however, on the importance of improving quality and quantity by recruiting able students, providing long and repeated experience in the other country, and facilitating close contact with the country's people and culture. While there was general agreement on encouragement for young scholars, special consideration was asked for the older generation who were deprived by the War of the opportunities for foreign study they would otherwise have had.

The Third Conference reaffirmed the great importance of language teaching which was stressed by its two predecessors. Special attention to greater use of students as language assistants, to research on methodology of Japanese language teaching, to preparation of texts and teaching aids, and to the formulation of language teaching policies was requested.

Once again, the inadequate volume of translations of Japanese scholarly work was noted and the establishment of a clearing house for translations was recommended. Furthermore, the Third Conference suggested research on the techniques of translation and the establishment of workshops for the training of competent translators. Cooperation between Japanese and American university presses was also urged as an important measure of improving both the production and distribution of translations.

Both Japanese and American libraries encounter serious difficulties in dealing with materials from the other country. While their difficulties are different, both library systems could benefit

through a program of exchanges of library personnel and mutual help in their training, and in the selection and acquisition of materials. The help of the American Library Association in the development of such cooperation would be welcome.

Further study is also needed of the feasibility of a central collection of research materials on America which could serve scholars throughout Japan as well as of improvements which can be made in the access which American scholars have to Japanese materials. Furthermore, in America the collections of Japanese materials must be expanded as rapidly as possible. In both cases, modern techniques of microfilming and reproduction deserve consideration.

IV. THE FOREIGN STUDENT AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The role of the foreign student in U. S. - Japan cultural and educational interchange is obvious. Be he an American in Japan, or a Japanese in America, his experience abroad is a matter of vital importance to both countries.

The Conference noted that in general the exchange of students between Japan and the United States is working well. However, there is room for improvement. Counseling procedures, for instance, should be extended and reinforced, perhaps by establishing a Japanese counseling and guidance center in the United States and an American counseling and guidance center in Japan. There is need to establish channels for the exchange of detailed and current information on the universities of both countries in order to facilitate accurate counseling of students wishing to study in the other country and to aid the decisions of admissions officers. In addition, orientation programs should be developed further as a continuing process, relating the programs given to the student at home to those provided on arrival in the host country, and home hospitality programs for students in both countries should be vigorously explored. Attention should also be given to facilitating the recognition and transfer of academic credits earned abroad and to the possibility of establishing standard application procedures for university admission.

The Japanese Delegation urged that American educators recognize the fact that Japanese students often study abroad for experience, language improvement and specific disciplinary training without regard to the acquisition of a degree.

Above all, further efforts must be made to break through the language barrier. The language preparation of both American and Japanese

students is often not adequate for their academic objectives. The First Conference, held in 1962, took note of this problem and called for application of "a massive effort" for its solution. This recommendation has yet to be implemented in full, and the Conference called upon both countries to take further action as a matter of urgency.

Another barrier to student exchange has been the relatively high cost of trans-Pacific travel. The Conference recommended that possibilities of securing lower rates of air travel for approved exchange students from both countries be explored so that these exchanges may be facilitated.

Finally, the role of the foreign student as a language and cultural informant in his host country should not be overlooked. Granted that he must not be unduly deterred from his primary objective, which is study, he is also an ambassador to his host university and to the surrounding community. As such, he has much to offer as well as to receive.

V. OTHER PROPOSALS

In the course of the Conference many suggestions for constructive actions were made by delegates and observers. The following are examples and are commended to appropriate public or private agencies for further study.

1. The development of joint research projects in such fields as urbanization; history of the Pacific area; international organizations; child development; theories of learning; and economic development.
2. Cooperation by Japan and the United States in helping UNESCO to work more effectively with universities in achieving its goals of international understanding.
3. Exchange of experience with regard to university administration and financial support, including relations to the tax system.
4. Exchange of experience and of concepts of general education in our two university systems.
5. Cooperative study of third cultures, for example European and Asian studies.

6. Sending a Japanese team to examine and evaluate contemporary Japanese studies in America.

7. Utilization of responsible representatives of American universities in the orientation programs given to Japanese students prior to their departure for the United States. The use of admissions officers and Foreign Student Advisers is particularly recommended.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Conference noted that its open and friendly statements, discussions, and analyses were significant in themselves in advancing U. S. - Japan relationships. At the same time, it recognized that its purpose was also to generate ideas and programs, and to provide stimulus for future action.

It therefore recommended specifically that in the interim before the next Conference, which should be held in the United States within the next two years:

a) Sister Japanese and American committees on educational and cultural cooperation be created to review, explore, and facilitate joint programs for exchange of information, students and teaching, and for closer cooperation in common educational pursuits and research in the social sciences and humanities.

b) Small working groups for joint study of specific subjects be encouraged when both countries see the need for them.

c) Each country undertake the proper support, under public or private auspices, of the work of these committees.